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لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله



# The MUSLIM SUNRISE

Second Quarter, 1950

## The Ahmadiyya Movement In Islam

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets, he came to serve and re-interpret the final and eternal teaching laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the *True and Real Islam* and seeks to uplift humanity and to establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmud Ahmad under whose directions the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them:

### INDIA

Qadian, East Punjab.

### PAKISTAN (Headquarters)

Rabwah, Via Chiniot,

The Punjab.

### U. S. A.

1. 2141 Leroy Place, N.W.,  
Washington, D. C.

2. 2522 Webster Avenue,  
Pittsburgh 19, Pa.

3. 613 Locust Street,  
St. Louis 1, Missouri.

4. 115 W. 116th St., Suite 2,  
New York 26, N. Y.

### UNITED KINGDOM

The London Mosque,

63 Melrose Road,

London S. W. 18.

### FRANCE

A. R. Malik,

220 Bd. Pereire

Paris 17 (m).

### SPAIN

K. I. Zafar,

Lista 58,

Madrid.

### SWITZERLAND

S. Nasir Ahmad,

Stampfenbach-Str. 63

Zurich.

### NETHERLANDS

Q. U. Hafiz,

Ruychroeklaan 34,

The Hague.

### NIGERIA

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### GOLD COAST

P.O. Box 39,

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### SIERRA LEONE

5 Goree Street,

Freetown.

### B. E. AFRICA

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### ISRAEL

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### SYRIA

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Shaghour, Damascuss.

### JAVA

Masjid Ahmadiyya,

Nagarawangi 57,

Tasikmalaja.

### BORNEO

Box 30, Jesselton.



# The Muslim Sunrise

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# What Is Islam?

Islam is the religion which is wrongly called Mohammedanism.

1. Islam means:

- (1) Peace
- (2) Surrender

The significance of the name Islam is the attainment of a life of perfect peace, and eternal happiness through complete surrender to the Will of God.

2. Absolute and uncompromising belief in One God is the central doctrine of Islam. "La-Ilaha, Illallah Muhammadur-Rasululla." "There is none worthy of worship but one and the only God (Allah), who possesses all excellences, and Muhammad is His prophet." This is the most important doctrine of Islam. Furthermore, Islam helps us to establish a permanent relationship with God and to realize Him during our earthly life as our Helper and Guide in all our affairs and undertakings.

3. Islam requires belief in all the prophets and spiritual guides including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius, and Zoroaster. Islam represents the completion of the mission of all the prophets from the earliest dawn of history. It teaches that in fact *all the prophets of God came with one and the same mission. Thus Islam establishes peace between all religions.*

4. Quran, the Muslim Scripture — the Word of God, was revealed to the Master-prophet Muhammad over thirteen hundred years ago and has been preserved intact without the slightest change. There are millions and millions of Muslims who know the whole Book by heart. It is an inexhaustible mine of spiritual truths which satisfy the needs of all peoples in all countries and all stations of life.

5. The establishment of true democracy and universal brotherhood without any discrimination of caste, creed, colour or country is the unique and unrivalled distinction of Islam. Islam has not only propounded but fulfilled and realized the splendid principles of democracy in the actual life and action of human society.

6. Following are a few of the distinctive features of Islam:

- (a) Liberation of women by establishing the equality of both sexes, safeguarding their rights and liberties and raising their status.
- (b) Absolute veto on all intoxicants.
- (c) Solution of economic problems.
- (d) Furnishing of humanity with the noblest practical ethics.
- (e) Promotion of science and education.

7. Following are some of the obligatory duties laid down by Islam:

- (a) Daily prayers.
- (b) Fasting in the month of Ramadhan.
- (c) Relief of poverty.
- (d) Pilgrimage once in one's lifetime, provided circumstances allow.

8. According to Islam life after death is a continuation of life on earth. Heaven and Hell begin right from here. Heaven is eternal and everlasting, while Hell is temporary. Hell is as a hospital treatment for the human soul which, as soon as it is cured, goes to Heaven. Heaven is the attainment of a life of everlasting progress and complete joy and happiness through union with God and by the development of the fine spiritual qualities and the unlimited capacities that have been implanted in man.

# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## اِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

### A Passage From The Holy Quran

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى  
لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ  
مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى  
سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ  
الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ  
وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَذَا كُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ٥

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was sent down as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present at home in this month, let him fast therein. But whoso is sick or is on a journey, shall

fast the same number of other days. Allah desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you, and that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful. (*The Holy Quran ii:186*)

من احاديث الرسول

## The Sayings of the Master Prophet Muhammad

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, said:

They will enter the Garden of Bliss who have a true, pure and merciful heart.

\* \* \* \* \*

He who is not affectionate to God's creatures, and to his own children, God will not be affectionate to him.

\* \* \* \* \*

To every young person who honors the old, on account of their age, may God appoint those who shall honor him in his years.

\* \* \* \* \*

The best of men is he from whom good accrues to humanity.

\* \* \* \* \*

All God's creatures are His family; and he is the most beloved of God who tries to do most good to God's creatures.

\* \* \* \* \*

Strive always to exceed in virtue and truth.

\* \* \* \* \*

Whoever is kind to His creatures, God is kind to him; therefore be kind to man on earth, whether good or bad; and being kind to bad, is to withhold him from badness, so that those who are in Heaven may be kind to you.

\* \* \* \* \*

# Excerpts From The Writings

of

**Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad**

**The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (1835-1908)**

## Islam is a Living Religion

It should be borne in mind that for proof of the blessings and fruits of Islam stated above, we do not refer the seekers after truth only to the past. Islam is not a dead religion, and we are not compelled to say that the blessings of Islam are left behind. It is in fact the unique excellence of the holy faith of Islam that its blessings are unbroken and continuous. It offers not only its blessings in the past but similar blessings even now. The world stands ever in need of blessings and heavenly signs, and it is absurd to suppose that it stood in need of such signs in the past but can do without them now. Man is a weak creature, and walks blindly until he is shown traces of the heavenly kingdom; and his faith is a blind faith until he witnesses the wonderful signs of the existence and power of God. The signs shown in a previous age are of no avail in a later age unless they are renewed. The relation of stories of wonders displayed in the past can never produce the conviction which signs witnessed by a man himself can do. Every new century is the inauguration of a new era and the beginning, as it were, of a new world. The God of Islam, who is the true God, therefore manifests new signs in each new world; and in the commencement of every new century, especially when the world goes astray from probity and righteousness and is involved in darkness, He raises a vicegerent of the Holy Prophet in the looking glass of whose nature the person of the Holy Prophet is imaged forth. The representative so raised shows the excellences of the Holy Prophet whom he follows and establishes the charge against his opponents by truth, by showing the reality and by exposing them; by truth, because he shows that

the prophet whom they rejected was a true prophet, and shows the heavenly signs for his truth; by showing the reality, because he solves all difficulties in the comprehension of the religion of the Prophet, and removes all doubts that are entertained with respect to it, and refutes all objections that are urged against it and by exposing them, because he rends asunder all the veils under which they hide themselves and lays bare before the world their folly in not comprehending nice points of religious truths, their love of remissness, ignorance and darkness and their being forsaken by God and cut off from communion with Him. The perfect man who is raised for this purpose is a recipient of Divine revelation, and he is purified and blessed and has his prayers accepted by God. He shows with clearness that God exists and that He is powerful over all, sees, hears and knows every thing, and regulates affairs according to His will, that prayers are in fact accepted and have an efficacy, and that the men of God actually show heavenly signs which were rejected and scoffed at by people as his appearance brings about a life in the faith of the people. The heavenly signs which were rejected and scoffed at by the people as opposed to the laws of nature and contrary to reason, or, if treated with respect, were considered at the most to be stories, are not only accepted as truths at his appearance because of their renewal at his hands, but the absurdity of the former position is also fully realized. It is then clearly seen and even regretted that what was taken to be wisdom was really folly, and that which was considered to be knowledge of the laws of nature was in fact ignorance.

In short, the Holy One raised by God falls like a flame upon the world and gives a light to every one according to his capacity. He is at first tried, thrown into afflictions, persecuted on all sides, abused and injured by all possible means and every attempt is made to bring him to disgrace, but as he has with him the argument of truth and Divine assistance, he overcomes all difficulties and vanquishes his enemies, and the rays of the light of his truth are made to pierce into the world by a powerful hand. When Almighty God sees that the earth has rejected him, He commands the holy host of heaven to bear testimony to his truth. Therefore a clear and bright testimony comes down for his



sake from heaven in the form of extraordinary heavenly signs, acceptance of prayer and the disclosure through him of deep religious truths and verities. This heavenly testimony gives sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, and the power of speech to the dumb. There are many who are drawn at that time to the truth; but blessed are they who accept him previously, for they on account of their strength of faith are granted the dignity of the *siddiqs* (the truthful servants of God). But this is the Grace of God, and He bestows it upon whom He wills.

To complete the argument that Islam is a living religion, I deem it my bounden duty to state further that finding the world involved in utter darkness and plunged in the depth of ignorance remissness, unbelief and *shirk*, and finding faith, sincerity and righteousness vanishing away, Almighty God has raised me to re-establish in the world the purity of doctrine and practice, and the purity of morals and faith, and to save Islam from the hostile attacks of those who with the weapons of a false philosophy and science, lawlessness, atheism, etc., are trying to damage this impregnable rock. It was exactly the time when Islam stood in need of heavenly assistance, and this Almighty God has vouchsafed by raising me. The general prevalence of error, which is to be witnessed in this age, has taken place in fulfilment of the prophecies relating to the appearance of the anti-Christ, as foretold by the prophets of God. The basis of these errors has been laid by Christianity, which inculcates the most fatal error. It was, therefore necessary that the revivalist or representative of the Holy Prophet appearing at the commencement of this century, should have come after the name of Christ, for the foundation of the present evil has been laid by the followers of Christ. It has been disclosed to me in a revelation that the soul of Jesus being informed of the poison with which Christianity affects the spiritual atmosphere, came into motion, for a spiritual re-advent into the world. Having thus come into motion, and finding his own people spreading destruction in the world, the soul of Jesus required that one resembling him in all points and having the same spirit and character should appear as his representative upon earth, there being such a spiritual likeness between the two that they may be considered as one.

So, according to the promise which Almighty God had already made He raised one resembling Jesus and in him was manifested the resolution, character and spirituality of Jesus. He and the Messiah were so closely united as to be considered as being of the same essence. The attractions of Jesus made his heart their habitation and fulfilled their requirement through him. In this sense, therefore his personality was considered as the personality of Christ himself, for the resolution of Christ was manifested in him and this manifestation was metaphorically expressed in spiritual language as the second advent of Christ. It is a deep spiritual law that the resolution of some one of the perfect ones who have passed away, is imaged in some living perfect man, and the unity of their ideas makes the connection so strong that the appearance of the latter is looked upon by the former as his own appearance. The person whose soul is thus united with the soul of a past saint becomes, as it were, an instrument for the manifestation of the will of the latter, and the will of the one is made by Almighty God identical with the will of the other. In short, it is a Divine law that the former prophets re-appear in the world in this manner. The second advent of Elias in the person of John took place according to this law; and if this law is not recognized, the Messiahship of Jesus would be seriously in question.

*(Review Of Religions, Vol. III)*

## New Headquarters of The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

We are happy to announce that the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, has, by Allah's Help and Grace, established the first mosque in the United States' capital, Washington, D.C.

The Movement has moved its headquarters and the office of THE MUSLIM SUNRISE from Chicago to the Washington mosque.

Our new address:

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam,  
2141 Leroy Place, N.W.,  
Washington, D.C.

# Religion And Its Function

By

**Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan**

What is Religion and what is its function? Religion is the way of life that should enable each individual to attain to the highest possible development in the spiritual, moral and physical spheres. Its function is to establish and maintain the most harmonious relationship between man and his Maker on the one hand and between man and man on the other. Is it not an irony then, that Religion should have come to be regarded as the principal cause of disharmony and discord? Where does the fault lie? Does it lie with Religion, or does it lie with us? I believe that it lies wholly and entirely with us. Our approach to Religion has become vitiated and the consequence is that in our search for Religion we are often led to stagnant and noxious pools rather than to the pure and ever fresh waters of the perennial fountain that alone can bestow and sustain healthy and vigorous spiritual life.

If my conception of Religion and its function is accurate we are at once led to certain conclusions from which there can be no escape. A harmonious relationship between man and his Maker is possible only on the basis of Revelation which should vouchsafe to man knowledge of the Existence and Attributes of God and of the manner in which man may establish a harmonious relationship with Him. Those who claim to attain to certain knowledge concerning God and His Attributes by the sole and unaided exercise of Reason, claim in effect to create or invent a god of their own fashioning. They are in the plight of mariners, who embark upon a voyage of discovery in unknown and uncharted oceans in the darkness of a perpetual night the gloom of which is not relieved by the twinkle of a single star, and without even a compass to guide them. The relationship between Reason and Revelation resembles that between the eye and light. Shut the one or shut out the other and no vision is possible. Reason itself demands that

for the human soul to set out upon its quest of God with confidence, light and guidance must come from God. Failing this there can be no certainty and, therefore, no confidence. In other words there can be no faith.

True, mankind has been passing through a process of physical, intellectual and spiritual evolution and the Revelation that may have sufficed for one stage may not prove adequate for subsequent stages. We are again forced to the conclusion that Divine Providence must have made adequate provision for each stage till mankind was ready to receive "the whole Truth." The "whole Truth" must then have been revealed. It must have been universal in its application and perfect in its provisions and thus adequate to all needs. It follows that the text of this Perfect Revelation must, in order that it should continue to fulfil its purpose in all ages, have been preserved pure and uncorrupted. The Revelation must contain full guidance for the purpose of establishing a harmonious relationship between God and man and for the beneficent regulation of all human relationships. There must also be adequate provision that the true meaning and significance of the Revelation as applying to the growing richness and complexity of the pattern of human life should be laid bare from age to age and epoch to epoch. These must be the minimum characteristics of the universal and perfect Revelation.

Thus far there need be no dissent. Differences arise when claims of perfection and universality are put forward and pressed on behalf of doctrines and teachings that are not reconcilable with each other. It is obvious that all these claims cannot be well founded. How are we then to be guided in making our choice and what is to be our attitude towards those that differ with us in this vital matter?

Having determined that Religion must be based on Revelation our first care must be to see that doctrines and teachings attributed to any particular religion are to be found in the Revelation which is alleged to be the basis of that religion. A good deal of confusion has been introduced into this subject by loose claims and still looser reasoning by which they are sought to be supported. The only method of inves-

tigation that holds out any hope of leading an enquirer to accurate conclusions is one of rigid insistence on the principle that no claim shall be admissible on behalf of a religion which is not supported by the text of the Revelation on which that religion founds itself. If we refuse to be dislodged from this perfectly sound position our field of enquiry will become definite and we shall avoid the waste of time and effort and the frustration that too often are the reward of the enquirer who permits himself to be drawn into the investigation of doctrines and teachings which have no foundation in any Revelation.

Our next care should be to safeguard ourselves against the fallacy which unfortunately is only too often resorted to by advocates of different religions who attempt to convince us of the truth of their own doctrines by trying to establish the falsity of other doctrines. This is an entirely vicious method of enquiry and has done more than anything else to poison the atmosphere of religious investigation and to engender feelings of bitterness between the followers of different religions in this country. We cannot establish that black is white by proving that red or green or yellow is not white. We cannot establish the truth of our own doctrine by proving the falsehood of the doctrine preached by our rival, for we do not thereby exclude the possibility that both may be false. This vicious process of reasoning has converted religious discussion into a competition in abuse and vituperation of all that ought to be held sacred and in high esteem. Doctrines and persons that are held dearer than life itself by the followers of one faith are subjected to the vilest calumny and abuse by the followers of what are supposed to be rival faiths. The result is that most serious minded people are turning away from the very idea of Religion itself, imagining that Religion furnishes the most potent incitement towards malice, hatred, strife and all manner of uncharitableness; whereas the truth is that Religion alone can supply that light and guidance for lack of which the world appears to be hurtling towards a bottomless pit of darkness, doubt and destruction. In this country, Religion, instead of being the pre-occupation of the sublime, the profound and the dignified has been suffered to become the sport of the vulgar, the cloak of the fraudulent and the battle cry of the demagogue and the agitator.

These have debased its pure currency to such a degree that the attempt to distinguish the genuine from the false appears to most to be a baffling and a despairing adventure. Yet, the qualities and characteristics of the genuine are so immeasurably above compared with those of the spurious and are so potently charged with beneficence that the effort to sort out the true from the false is the most profitable investment that it is open to any of us to make.

The first requisite in this connection is complete and utter sincerity of purpose. We cannot hope to succeed in our quest after the Divine unless we set out with a single-minded and earnest purpose that will permit no consideration whatsoever to turn you aside for one moment from treading the path that leads to your goal. And success in this quest is worth achieving even at the cost of all that is commonly considered of value and is held dear. For, success means that the seeker has arrived at the very fountainhead of all Beneficence and will henceforth by rightly guided in all his motives and actions, so that nothing can go wrong with him in any field of endeavor. Would any effort be too great, any price too high for this achievement?

I have often heard it stated that the paths that lead to God are multifarious. This is true only in the sense that God may himself indicate various ways of approach to Him, but in no other. Indeed, perfect development in the spiritual, moral and physical spheres itself demands progress in many directions and necessitates approach to the Divine Majesty through every avenue that may be open. In this sense there are as many paths leading to God as there are Divine Attributes but progress must be made along every one of them and not one of them may be neglected. It would, however, be a fatal fallacy to assume that all current creeds, some of which are no more than bundles of superstitions designed only to defraud the credulous and the gullible, are paths leading to God and that, therefore, the search for true Religion is a waste of time and effort. Such a proposition would be utterly and ridiculously untenable.

What is then the criterion that would help us to discriminate between the true and the false in matters of Religion? The criterion

would in each case depend upon the point from which the enquirer desires to set out, but here is one that should serve the purpose and is, at least, not open to controversy. It has been truly said that a tree is known by the fruits thereof. This sounds simple enough, but this is exactly where an enquirer encounters his greatest difficulty. Where are to be found the fruits of Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam?

I have always believed that all these great religions had their origin and foundation in truth, but it is greatly to be doubted whether the Prophets through whom these faiths were revealed would, in the professions and conduct of those who call themselves their followers today, recognise any very great resemblance to that which they had themselves taught. Here lies the crux of the matter. We are not acting fairly either to ourselves or to the faiths that we profess to follow. If this is so in the matter of religion, where complete sincerity and strict conformity of conduct to profession must always be the rule, how are we to expect that our conduct in other spheres should give proof of greater integrity and sincerity? Surely the time has come when we must subject ourselves to a thorough examination and take up a position in the matter of religion which we can sincerely and conscientiously maintain both in the matter of doctrine and in the matter of conduct. The commonest standards of honesty and decency require that we should cease to masquerade under false labels and should stop defaming the faiths that we profess to follow by acting in defiance of their express teachings. He whose reason rebels against the doctrines of Original Sin, Atonement, Trans-substantiation and a Triune God, whose sense of discipline revolts against turning the left cheek when the right is smitten and whose economic theories are outraged by the suggestion that he should give away his shirt also to the person who demands from him his cloak, cannot in honesty and decency continue to call himself a Christian. He who looks upon prayer as a useless formality, regards fasting as a sublimation of a barbaric penance, the pilgrimage as an uncouth relic from the pre-atom age and the *Zakat* as an unfair imposition and finds his delight in betting on race-horses, cocktails and dancing, has no justifi-

cation for continuing to call himself a Muslim. In the same way a person who habitually acts in defiance of the teachings contained in the Vedas, has no right to call himself a Hindu.

Our first duty, therefore, is to discover by severe self-examination whether we really and truly believe in the doctrines and teachings of the faiths that we profess to follow and if we find that we do not, we should have the honesty and the courage openly to confess that we no longer believe in them and to refuse to identify ourselves with them. Honest doubt and even disbelief is far to be preferred to and much more to be respected than a hypocritical profession of belief. Those of us who find that we still have sincere belief in the doctrines and teachings of our respective faiths must then conform our conduct strictly to them in every particular. It is only by this means that we can find out whether our respective faiths can bring forth the fruit that they hold out the promise of. If we find even then that the fruit is not forthcoming we must conclude that our search for true Religion must be directed elsewhere. For instance, if a Christian having full faith in the doctrines taught by Christianity and conforming in every particular to its teachings, fails, when the occasion arises, "to move mountains" by the power of his faith, he must conclude that the current doctrines and teachings of Christianity are no longer able to yield the fruit that Jesus had promised. True, the moving of mountains referred to in the gospels in this connection is a figure of speech, of the kind with which the scriptures of every religion abound, and is not to be taken literally; but it must have some significance in this context. It might, for instance, signify the overcoming of apparently insurmountable difficulties. Whatever the interpretation that might be put upon it, a Christian possessing faith "like unto a mustard seed" must, in order to establish the truth even to his own satisfaction of what is today presented as Christianity be able to "move mountains" in accordance with that interpretation by the mere power of his faith. Failing that, the conclusion is inescapable that what passes current for Christianity today is unable to stand the test laid down by Jesus himself. Surely there must be at least one perfect Christian today who could in his own person show us the fruits of the tree of Christianity. Why



is it that all the best fruits of that tree should have been left generations behind? If that tree still yields or is capable of yielding fruit we should know where to find it. If the fruit is presented to us we should be prepared to partake of it with the utmost eagerness provided always that the fruit is of the description and quality promised in the Christian scriptures. In default of it we must conclude that the "orchard" has been committed to the care of other husband-men and we should continue our search in other directions.

That is a test that must be applied to every faith and religious system that demands our allegiance on the basis of the promise that by accepting its tenets and conforming to its teachings we can attain to the highest spiritual, moral and physical development and can establish the most harmonious relationship between God and ourselves on the one hand and between our fellow beings and ourselves on the other. If a religion does not even *claim* to do that much for us, we must exclude it from our consideration at the very outset. If it does put forward that claim, that is to say, if that claim is to be found in the Revelation upon which the religion is founded, we are entitled to ask to be shown the fruits thereof, again in accordance with the same Revelation. If the fruits are forthcoming we shall judge of the tree from the fruits. If they fulfil the promise held out we should have no hesitation in accepting the claim of the religion and in giving it our whole-hearted allegiance. If no fruit is forthcoming or the fruit that is offered is rotten or poisonous we must unhesitatingly reject the claim of the religion and no consideration whatever should induce us to continue to accord it our allegiance.

That which more than anything else is destructive of genuine religious thought is our attitude of make-believe. So many of us continue to profess allegiance to faiths and beliefs that have long ceased to have any practical significance in our lives that the very name of Religion has been brought into utter contempt. Neither hereditary, nor family, nor communal, nor social, nor party considerations or attachments should have any power to persuade us to continue to profess allegiance to a faith or system in which we have ceased sincerely to

believe. No man can be true in any relationship who is false in his relationship to God, and he who has forsworn his soul will be ready to forswear everything else if only the temptation be strong enough.

I do not agree with those who hold that it is better to worship a dead god than to worship no god at all. As I have said already, honest and sincere disbelief is far less harmful than a false profession of belief. The first at least indicates an upright mind that may be relied upon to function with integrity; the second denotes a mind timid, hesitant and uncertain, prone to make compromises rather than to stand boldly on the side of Truth; a mind that prefers what in the political jargon of today would be called "appeasement" rather than a courageous, though often desperate stand. In the second place, search of the kind that I have indicated is bound to succeed. The very conception of Providence guarantees that that must be so and the experience of countless men and women, whose integrity has been above even a breath of suspicion, fully confirms it. To me the fullness of life is inconceivable without Religion, and it is equally inconceivable that a zealous, earnest and sincere seeker after God should fail in due time to be guided along the paths that lead to Him. Indeed, He has promised: "Those who strive after Me, them shall I surely guide along the paths that lead to Me."

The moment we import into the field of religious investigation and enquiry a spirit of earnestness, sincerity and deep reverence we shall deprive the vulgar and the ignorant, the demagogue and the agitator of their principal weapon for the fomenting of hatred and discord. A person who is truly religious can never permit himself to be guilty of intolerance. He who truly esteems his own religion and is deeply attached to the ideals that it places before him, will ever be at pains to eschew in word and deed whatever may have the slightest tendency to hurt the susceptibilities of others who must be presumed to be equally devoted and attached to the doctrines and teachings of their respective faiths. Sincerity in one's own beliefs and devotion to one's own faith are not only not incompatible with the widest tolerance and the deepest benevolence towards the beliefs and ideals of others but are the surest guarantees of them. He who truly honors his own parents would best appreciate sentiments of filial duty and would not

only never affront another by scurrilous or disrespectful references to his parents but would derive genuine pleasure from showing them respect and doing them honor.

Tolerance and benevolence towards beliefs and faiths other than our own do not mean that we should *pretend* belief where there is none, but that we should recognise that others may believe with sincerity equal to our own in something that has no appeal for us and towards which their sentiments are likely to be as delicate as ours are towards that which we believe in.

Inasmuch as it is of the essence of religion that it should promote perfect communion between man and God, Religion must be based upon Divine Revelation. That man may invent or construct a Religion for himself which should be capable of fulfilling this primary function, is only another way of stating that man may create or invent a god himself. Once this fundamental is clearly grasped, the rest is comparatively simple. Spiritual guidance has from time to time been vouchsafed through Divine Revelation to different sections of mankind on a tribal, racial or national basis. For some centuries past mankind has, however, been moving towards a pattern of life which though made up of various sections bears the characteristics of a whole. Divine Providence has in all cases provided for our spiritual needs in advance. A perfect Revelation of universal application must, therefore, have vouchsafed before this tendency towards a common pattern began to manifest itself. If that is so, the text of this Revelation, being designed to endure for ever, must have been preserved pure and free from corruption and interpolation. Provision must also have been made to lay bare its true significance as applicable to the pattern of human life from age to age. All this is rendered certain and inevitable by reflecting upon God's Attribute of Providence. That being so, it becomes the first duty of everyone of us to carry out a sincere and earnest investigation for the purpose of determining where that Revelation is to be found. The infallible test would be that by acting upon it man should be able to put himself in harmonious relationship with God. It is only leadership in that sphere that can help today to save a distracted world from utter ruin and I have the surest foundation for my profound conviction that it is Islam alone that can and will furnish that leadership.

# Fasting in Islam

## Commentary on a Verse of Holy Quran

*(For the text and translation of the verse see page 3.)*

The ground having been suitably prepared in the preceding two verses, this verse gives the awaited commandment about fasting. But even here the actual commandment is preceded by a suitable description of the month of Ramadan in which fasts were to be observed. The month was not chosen arbitrarily but was selected for the purpose of fasting because it was a sacred month in which the Quran was revealed. And the Quran is not an ordinary book. It is a Book full of right guidance and of bright Signs and of things that help to differentiate between truth and falsehood. This sublime foreward placed before the commandment about fasting contains an implied question to the effect: Will you not now fast when fasting is a tried thing, when it is so useful, when it is to be observed only for a few days, when even in these few days suitable facilities have been provided, and lastly when these few days correspond with a month which is full of blessings?

As hinted above, this verse mentions the reason for which the month of Ramadan was selected for the purpose of fasting. It was in this month that the Quran was revealed. The revelation of the Quran in the month of Ramadan may mean two things: (1) that the revelation of the Holy Book commenced in the month of Ramadan, for it is on record that it was on the 24th of Ramadan that the Holy Prophet received his first revelation (Musnad & Jarir); (2) that the revelation of the Quran was repeated to the Holy Prophet every year in the month of Ramadan, for it is also on record that the angel Gabriel rehearsed every year to the Holy Prophet the whole of the revealed portion of the Quran during this month and this he continued to do till the very year of the Prophet's death (Bukhari, ch. on Manaqib). Thus in a way even the whole of the Quran may be said to have been sent down in Ramadan.

The words, *clear proofs of guidance and discrimination*, point out that the Quran is a Book which is not content with making mere assertions. It supports every assertion it makes with necessary reasons and arguments which are both clear and convincing, and it also adduces heavenly Signs which go to discriminate right from wrong with such clearness that they leave no room for doubt. This excellence belongs exclusively to the Quran. Indeed, other scriptures, too have been spoken of as "a light and guidance," but about none of them has it been said that they supply reasons, arguments and Signs in support of their assertions.

Although former Prophets also were given Signs that people might accept them as divine Messengers, yet the scriptures they brought contained nothing that might bear testimony to their truth. It is only the Quran that contains all kinds of evidence — rational, scriptural and heavenly — to demonstrate the truth of its teachings so that it might itself furnish necessary evidence of its truth, and that, unlike other scriptures, tales and stories of the past might not form its sole support.

The clause, *let him fast therein*, signifies that it is necessary to fast all the days of the month of Ramadan; it will not do to fast only for a few days. Thus out of every twelve months in the year one at least — that of Ramadan — must be so devoted to the worship of God.

The clause, *whoso is sick or is on a journey, he shall fast the same number of other days*, at first appears to be an unnecessary repetition of what has already been said in the preceding verse in identical words, but really it is not so; for whereas in the previous verse this clause formed part of a verse that was meant to prepare the ground for the commandment to fast, in this verse it forms part of the actual commandment. The clause signifies that if in the month of Ramadan one happens to be sick or is on a journey, one should not fast, owing to the extra hardship entailed, but should fast the same number of

other days when one has recovered from sickness or when the journey is over. The Quran, however, wisely refrains from defining the terms "sickness" and "journey," leaving them to be defined by the common usage of the people.

The clause, *He desires not hardship for you*, points to the very important principle that divine commands are not meant to cause trouble or inconvenience but to afford ease and facility. In this connection it may well be noted that St. Paul looks upon the Law as an entanglement with "the yoke of bondage" if not as an actual curse (Gal. III and V). But he forgets that true freedom, and for that matter, true happiness lie only in willing obedience to a good and righteous legislation. The Islamic law, even "in meats and drinks and divers washings, and carnal ordinances," is a real help and guidance rather than a hindrance and a bondage. The clause, *So that you may complete the number*, indicates that God's purpose in prescribing a fixed number of days is that believers may be able to complete the number which, in His sight, is essential for their spiritual welfare. A fixed number was essential; for, otherwise, some people might have failed to fast even the minimum number, while others would have unduly suffered for doubt as to their having completed the necessary number even after they had long exceeded it.

The clause, *that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you*, points to yet another object underlying the commandment. All such expressions in which the offering of a particular praise to God is enjoined signify two things: (1) that man being God's creation should continuously offer praise to Him, invoking the particular divine attribute that may suit the occasion; (2) that he should also try to reflect in his person the self-same attribute of God. "Exalting God" would therefore mean not only God's glorification but the uplift and exaltation of the devotee himself. In fact God stands in need of no praise. He is what He is whether we praise Him or not. So truly speaking, everything is for the benefit of man himself, and the benefit underlying fasting is the exaltation of man, morally and spiritually and in a sense physically as well.

The final clause, *that you may be grateful*, is also full of deep meaning. God is not cruel or unkind; He has due regard for our weaknesses and He does not put us to unnecessary trouble; and whatever seeming trouble He puts us to is for our own good. This kind and loving attitude of God towards us ought to give rise to a corresponding feeling of love for Him in our hearts and we ought to feel grateful to Him for His love and kindness.

To a superficial observer the language of the Quran as used in this verse might appear to be rather unconnected, forming independent clauses. But a closer study reveals a beautiful arrangement between them. In fact the four clauses in the concluding portion of this verse furnish reasons for the four commandments contained in the first portion of the verse, the succeeding reasons following the reversed order of the preceding commandments in a most natural manner. The first reason given by the verse is continued in the clause, *Allah desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you*. Though the apparent wording of this clause is different from the wordings of the succeeding clauses actually it is also one of those that supply a reason, for in reality the clause stands like this, "that you be afforded facility, etc." Corresponding to this clause we have the last commandment of the verse i.e., *whoso is sick or is on a journey*, etc. The second clause supplying a reason is, *that you may complete the number*, corresponding to which we have the commandment, *who-soever of you is present at home in this month, let him fast therein*, hinting that God means the Muslims to fast the whole month. The third clause supplying a reason is, *that you exalt Allah for His having guided you*. Corresponding to this we have the words, *a guidance for mankind*, etc.

Finally comes the clause, *that you may be grateful*, corresponding to which we have the clause, *the month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was sent down*, hinting that the wise God has chosen the most sacred and the most blessed part of the year for fasting so that you may be doubly benefited by it.

## CURRENT TOPICS

### Muslim Attitude Toward Christians

"Anti-Christian fanaticism there was therefore none. Even in early years Muhammedans never refused to worship in the same buildings as Christians. The various insulting regulations which tradition represents Christians as forced to endure were directed not so much against the adherents of another faith as against the barely tolerated inhabitants of a subjugated state. It is true that the distinction is often difficult to observe, as religion and nationality were one and the same thing to Muhammedans. In any case religious animosity was a very subordinate phenomenon. It was a gradual development and seems to me to have made a spasmodic beginning in the first century under the influence of ideas adopted from Christianity. It may seem paradoxical to assert that it was Christian influence which first stirred Islam to religious animosity and armed it with the sword against Christianity, but the hypothesis becomes highly probable when we have realised the indifferentism of the Muhammedan conquerors. We shall constantly see hereafter how much they owed in every department of intellectual life to the teaching of the races which they subjugated. Their attitude towards other beliefs was never so intolerant as was that of Christendom at that period. Christianity may well have been the teaching influence in this department of life as in others. Moreover at all times and especially in the first century the position of Christians has been very tolerable, even though the Muslims regarded them as an inferior class. Christians were able to rise to the highest offices of state, even to the post of vizier, without any compulsion to renounce their faith. Even during the period of the crusades when the religious opposition was greatly intensified, again through Christian policy, Christian officials cannot have been uncommon: otherwise Muslim theorists would never have uttered their constant invectives against the employment of Christians in administrative duties. Naturally zealots appeared at all times on the Muhammedan as well as on the Christian side and occa-



sionally isolated acts of oppression took place: these were, however, exceptional. So late as the eleventh century, church funeral processions were able to pass through the streets of Baghdad with all the emblems of Christianity and disturbances were recorded by the chroniclers as exceptional. In Egypt, Christian festivals were also regarded to some extent as holidays by the Muhammedan population. We have but to imagine these conditions reversed in a Christian kingdom of the early middle ages and the probability of my theory will become obvious.

"The Christians of the East, who had broken for the most part with the orthodox Church, also regarded Islam as a lesser evil than the Byzantine established Church. Moreover Islam, as being both a political and ecclesiastical organisation, regarded the Christian church as a state within a state and permitted it to preserve its own juridical and at first its own governmental rights. Application was made to the bishops when anything was required from the community and the churches were used as taxation offices. This was all in the interests of the clergy who thus found their traditional claims realised. These relations were naturally modified in the course of centuries; the crusades, the Turkish wars and the great expansion of Europe widened the breach between Christianity and Islam, while as the East was gradually brought under ecclesiastical influence, the contrast grew deeper: the theory, however, that the Muhammedan conquerors and their successors were inspired by a fanatical hatred of Christianity is a fiction invented by Christians."

Becker, Carl, *Islam and Christianity*, London.

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## Tolerance in Islam

Thus Islam brought along an enthusiastic and revolutionary religious spirit. . . . The inhabitants of conquered lands were permitted to retain their old faiths. The mission of the Caliphs concerned the Arab Empire only. This was the motive of the holy wars. Thus, the Caliph Abu Bakr said to his army when it was leaving to attack Byzantium: "When a people leaveth off to fight in the ways of the Lord, the Lord casteth off that people."

"In war, the troops were ordered to spare Christian and Jewish religious shrines. They belonged to related creeds, and were consecrated to the worship of the same God. Mohammed himself had ordered Mu'ad Ibn Djebal, marching against Yemen, not to disturb any Jew in the practice of his religion. There is a Moslem saying: 'If you would receive my mercy,' says God, 'show ye mercy to my creatures.' The war was waged against the remains of the Roman Empire, to use its ruins as a pedestal for the new, gentle power of the Orient.

"Therefore, the Moslems wanted to follow other paths than the Roman military power had. The Caliphs reminded their generals of the words of the Prophet: 'He who torments human beings in this world, shall be tormented by God on the Day of Judgment.' The document known as the 'Covenant of Omar', dating from the Abassidic era, regulates exactly the status of non-Moslems in countries under Arab rule. The aim was to provide security under the law for conquerors and vanquished alike.

"Just how alien the concept of religious bigotry and intolerance originally was to the Moslem mind is demonstrated by the Story of the 'House of the Jew.' This house had stood in the vicinity of Bestra, in Syria; during Omar's reign it was razed by a governor, who built a mosque on its site. When the Caliph had heard about it, he became angry, and ordered the injustice to be immediately rectified, and the mosque torn down. The Arabs did not want to waive the privileges of the conqueror, but neither did they want to abuse them in an ungodly manner. They were considered the aristocrats among Islamic peoples. It was forbidden to sell an Arab in slavery — but his status of aristocracy imposed upon him the obligation of being kind and merciful, too . . .

"They built their mosques not merely for places of worship, but of education, too. Wherever their wars of conquest brought them, they provided for schools and education, especially for the poor. In the Arab language they saw the finest and most beautiful instrument of

the Islamic religion, to be sheltered and cultivated like a precious flower. This is how the Moslems shielded and glorified their poets. This is why their philologists and grammarians were the best of the Middle Ages. . . .

"Thus the slow invasion of the Arabs created a peculiar situation. The Spanish people looked to the conquerors hopefully, the Gothic princes trembled for their properties, and the Church alone recognized the historical portent of the hour. The Church was resolved to fight to the last man, and called for a crusade against Islam. Martyrs and more martyrs were sacrificed; the Arab war of expansion became the struggle of one great religion against another. But this had never been the intention of Islam. Thus the Church gave the Spanish war a completely different, more savage and bloodier character than any of the previous campaigns of the Caliphs ever had. As late as in 851 A.D., a Spanish nun, at the height of religious frenzy, shouted at her Islamic Kadi: 'As for me, Judge, I am sister of one of those six heroes who perished on the scaffold because they derided your false prophet; and I no less plainly declare that Christ is God, and that your religion is the invention of the Devil.'

"Nevertheless, Islam continued to adhere to its policy of tolerance. No man was converted under duress in Spain either. The result was that the Spanish populace did not become assimilated to the Arabs. Those Christians who had embraced the Islamic faith, re-joined the Church after the expulsion of the Moslems. The Arab conquerors not merely took good care to spare all Catholic institutions, but even permitted the establishment of new monasteries and convents. Intermarriage, too, was permitted. The Spaniards could keep their own judges, who passed sentences according to their own laws in all matters not concerning Moslems. Still, a great many Christians joined Islam. Converts enjoyed exemption from special taxation, and were eligible for government posts. Even Theodiscus the Greek, successor of Saint Isidore on the throne of Bishop of Seville, is said to have embraced the Moslem faith, even before the invasion, out of religious conviction, for he considered it a purer manifestation of monotheism.

Kayser, Rudolf, *The Life and Time of Jehudah Halevi*, New York.

# A Vindication of Islam in America

By S. Nasir Ahmad, Ahmadiyya Missionary  
in Switzerland

The task of reviving Islam has in this age been taken up by the Ahmadiyya Movement which was started by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, (1835 — 1908) for the entire world. He maintained that the God of Islam is a Living God and that, since He had chosen him for the service of Islam, anybody attempting to hinder his mission would meet his end in a way that would serve simultaneously as a sign of the truth of Islam. In the Eastern countries there took place quite a number of signs which supported the claims of Hazrat Ahmad. Many remarkable signs were shown by God in the West as well. Here is the story of one in brief:

Dr. John Alexander Dowie appeared on the religious stage of America about the end of the last century and proclaimed that he was Elijah come to announce the second advent of Jesus which was to follow within 25 years of his appearance. Not far from the city of Chicago he procured a site and founded a town called Zion. He claimed to heal through his prayer. He was able to gather a large number of followers, presumably by virtue of his high financial position. He was said to lead a life of princes. At the same time he embarked on a campaign against Islam, which to us does not seem a mere coincidence. He wrote in his paper, the *Leaves of Healing*: "I pray to God that the day may soon come when Islam is destroyed. O Lord, let this so happen! O God, annihilate Islam!!"

Further he declared himself a prophet of God and said that if he was not a true prophet, there was none else on the face of earth. He also started abusing the Holy Prophet of Islam.

In 1902, when Hazrat Ahmad learned of this, he wrote him asking to accept his challenge to prove himself to be a true messenger of God. He told Dowie that it was not at all difficult to ascertain who the true prophet was. Let both pray to God and invoke His decision in the matter. Let both pray that God may destroy the imposter in the lifetime of the true prophet. This challenge was not heeded to. It was repeated in 1903. Thereupon Hazrat Ahmad caused it to be pub-

shed in many newspapers all over America among which the following names may be mentioned: *Chicago Interpreter*; *Argonaut* of San Francisco; *Literary Digest*, New York; *New York Mail*; *Boston Record*; *Glasgow Herald*; *New York Commercial Advertiser*, etc. etc. Upon this Dr. Dowie commented in his paper in the following words:

"There is a Mohammadan Messiah in India who has repeatedly written to me that Jesus Christ lies buried in Kashmir, and people ask me why I do not answer him. Do you imagine that I shall reply to such gnats and flies? If I were to put down my foot on them I would crush out their lives. I give them a chance to fly away and live".

He wrote further in his paper dated 19th December, 1902, that it was his task to collect people from the East and West, from the North and South and colonise Christians in Zion and other towns, till the day came when Islam was swept out of the world.

The challenge of Hazrat Ahmiad, as reported by *New Commercial Advertiser* of New York, ran thus:

"I am about seventy years of age, while Dr. Dowie, (as he himself states,) is about fifty-five and therefore, compared with me, he is a young man still. But since the matter is not to be settled by age, I do not care for this great disparity in years. The whole matter rests in the hands of Him Who is the Lord of heaven and earth and Judge over all judges, and He will decide it in favour of the true claimant. . . . though he may try as hard as he can to fly from the death which awaits him, yet his flight from such a contest will be nothing less than death to him; and calamity will certainly overtake his Zion, for he must take the consequences of either the acceptance of the challenge or its refusal."

Let us follow the story of Dr. John Alexander Dowie. It did not take long before God laid His hand on him. He witnessed a rebellion against himself in the very town of Zion. His wife and son turned against him. It was widely said that although he had forbidden the use of liquor among his followers, he himself was addicted to alcoholic drinks. He was accused, and proved, of embezzlement. He was turned out of Zion and was deprived of his huge wealth. And shortly after living in such miserable condition he died. It is no wonder that the

news of his death was published along with detailed references to the prophecy made by Ahmad, the Promised Messiah. *The Truth Seeker* of New York wrote in its issue of 15th June, 1907:

"The Qadian man predicted that if Dowie accepted the challenge 'he shall leave the world before my eyes with great sorrow and torment'. If Dowie declined, the Mirza said, 'the end would only be deferred; death awaited him just the same, and calamity will soon overtake Zion'. That was the Grand Prophecy: Zion should fall and Dowie die before Ahmad. It appeared to be a risky step for the Promised Messiah to defy the restored Elijah to an endurance test, for the challenger was by fifteen years the older of the two and probabilities in a land of plagues and fanatics were against him as a survivor, but he won out."

Another paper, *Dunville Gazette* published on the 7th June, 1907:

"Ahmad and his adherents may be pardoned for taking some credit for the accuracy with which the prophecy was fulfilled a few months ago."

Yet another paper, the *Herald*, Boston, wrote on the 23rd June, 1907:

"Dowie died with his friends fallen away from him and his fortune dwindled. He suffered from paralysis and insanity. He died a miserable death, with Zion city torn and frayed by internal dissensions. Mirza comes forward frankly and states that he has won his challenge."

The great sign mentioned above is a manifestation of some attributes of God, namely Jealousy, Ownership and Mastership. God can only be seen through His attributes. He is Creator, Sustainer, Helper, Merciful, Beneficent, Forgiving, All-Hearing, All-Knowing etc. etc. Since the situation stated above demanded the manifestation of His attribute of Jealousy for His true prophets, Dr. Dowie had to meet his end in such a miserable way.

This great sign establishes the truth of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian. It also serves as a vindication of Islam as the unfortunate doctor reaped the fruits of his invectives hurled at the Holy Prophet of Islam. It further proves beyond an iota of doubt that Islam is going to be the future religion of the world.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Forgotten Religions: A Symposium.* Edited by Vergilius Ferm. New York. Philosophical Library. 1950. Price \$7.50.

This book, as the editor tells us in the Preface, "is an attempt to bring together expressions of the faiths of men who belong to civilizations far remote from that of our own". The theme of this symposium is to show that many of these religions which are either absolutely forgotten or isolated from own immediate traditions possess, "ideas and manners which, may in some respects, not only compare favorably with those of our day but even surpass some of the twisted aberrations of our cultural history". This idea is not strange to Islam. The Holy Quran teaches its followers that, "Verily there has not been any people to whom a warner has not been sent". The Muslims are supposed to accept all prophets. They believe that the Holy Quran contains truths from all previous gospels.

The ancient religions discussed include those of Sumaria, ancient Egypt, Syria, Babylonia, Greece, Persia, Tibet, Australia and North and South America. The contributors of various essays are usually specialists in their fields and have expressed their views freely. We consider this book useful both for scholars in this field and average readers. Every essay gives a short biography of the writer and a bibliography on the religion discussed.

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*How Great Religions Began.* Joseph Gaer. New York, Dodd, Mead & Company. 1949. Price \$3.00.

*How Great Religions Began* was originally published in 1929. The book was revised in 1935 and it is its eighth edition which we have now before us. The author tells the story of different religions with simplicity and reverence. The theme of the book remains to be the author's basic belief that there is some valuable truth in every religion.

We were naturally interested in the author's discussion of Islam. This he has done with the same spirit of sincerity which flows all through the book. However, the author, in some instances, has relied upon the information given by some extremely biased and prejudiced Western writers.

For example, the author states that after the Holy Prophet Muhammad had migrated to Medina, he started plundering the Meccan caravans, on their way from Syria to Mecca. If the author would have used the original historical sources, he would have found that the Prophet had to leave Mecca only because the Meccans intended to kill him and thus to bring an early end to Islam. After the Holy Prophet's migration, the Meccans were more than ever bent upon finishing this religion all together. They took oaths of hostility against the Prophet from one another and also threatened the Medinites that if they would not take arms against Muhammad and his followers, the Meccans would attack Medina. It can be readily seen that any alert person would have been bound to institute some reconnaissance system to keep informed about the activities of the hostile Meccans whose evil intentions were, hardly concealed. This is what is described by biased writers as plundering the Meccan caravans. They seem to forget that the Prophet Muhammad could not possibly afford to provoke any war while he could muster only three hundred very poorly equipped men at the time when the Meccans attacked Medina with nearly one thousand well-organized and well-armed soldiers.

At another place the author reports the Holy Prophet having said that if the Meccans would not permit him to perform pilgrimage in Kaa'ba, he would use his sword. The truth is that when the Prophet marched toward Mecca with 1500 of his followers, he gave them explicit instructions that there would not be any demonstrations of arms against the enemy. More than that, when the Meccans refused to permit the Prophet and his companions to perform the pilgrimage, he returned to Medina signing an agreement with the Meccans that the Muslims could come back for their pilgrimage only next year.

However, the general tone of the book is sympathetic and sincere. The language is vibrant and simple and makes easy reading. The book is also decorated with some wood engravings.

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*A Commentary on the Creed of Islam: Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani On the Creed of Najm al-Din al-Nasafi.* Translated with Introduction and Notes by Earl Edgar Elder. New York. Columbia University Press. 1950. Price \$3.75.



*A Commentary on the Creed of Islam* is in the Columbia University Press series of the Records of Civilization Sources and Studies. The Creed of Al-Nasafi has held a high place in the literature of Islamic Jurisprudence and Dr. Elder has done a great service to the West by introducing an English translation of this eminent work. *The Creed* discusses such subjects as, the real essence of things, the world, some attributes of Allah, sins, beliefs, miracles and Khilafat. Muslim scholars may not agree fully with all the interpretations of Al-Nasafi but they have always held this thesis with highest esteem.

Dr. Elder has added an Introduction of 32 pages to the translation. In this he has attempted to discuss the formulation of the doctrinal position of Islam. Besides the merits of this discussion, the author has followed some biased notions which have long been refuted by Muslim scholars. For example, Dr. Elder states that if necessity demanded, The Holy Prophet Muhammad abrogated some verses of the Holy Quran by new ones. The Quran has emphatically refuted this idea. The two references of the Holy Quran which are usually cited by the Christian critics in this connection do not refer to the abrogations of the Quran but those of the previous revelations whose place Quran has taken. That is quite clear from the very context of those references.

At another place, Dr. Elder says that the Holy Quran and Tradition give little consideration to the question as to what degree prophets might be liable to error in conveying their message. He further comments that "there is no trace of sinlessness (of the prophets, ed.), nay rather some are guilty of grave sins". In fact, nothing could be further from truth. The Quran not only speaks of individual prophets in terms of highest praise, but also lays down clearly that the prophets cannot go against the commandments of God. It says: "And We did not send before thee any apostle but We revealed to him that there is no god but Me, therefore serve Me. And they say, The Benificent God has taken to Himself a son. Glory be to Him. Nay they are honored servants; they do not precede Him in speech and only according to His commandments do they act". (XXI:25-27).

Elsewhere it says:

"It is not attributable to a prophet that he should act unfaithfully (III:160).

These two verses set out in general words the principle of sinlessness of prophets and it leaves not the least doubt about the position it takes.

We must say, however, that Dr. Elder has made a very valuable contribution to the English literature on Islamic Jurisprudence by translating the Creed of Al-Nasafi.

*Palestine—Mohammedan Holy Land.* Charles D. Matthews. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1949. Price \$3.00.

At present, a book on Palestine which focuses attention on its character as a Muslim Holy Land may be wholly disregarded by those who favor the establishment of the state of Israel, no matter through how unjustified means. But, the author, however, presents this translation of two old Arabic documents as fully divorced from political intricacies of the problem. Dr. Matthews believes that Palestine is a holy land of all three religions—Islam, Judaism and Christianity. This book is his contribution to the history of Islam in Palestine.

The present volume offers a popular translation of two Arabic manuscripts, dealing with two religious centers—Jerusalem and Hebron. Both are in the nature of pilgrims' guides to the holy places, recounting stories, legends, personages and events in connection with the shrines. First of these series is titled as *The Book of Arousing Souls to Visit Jerusalem's Holy Walls* written by Al-Fazari and dates back to thirteenth century. The other one is, *The Book of Inciting Desire to Visit Abraham the Friend of Allah*, by Abul-Fida, written in 1351. The material of these books is neither completely from authentic Islamic sources nor from generally accepted historical data of the time. The authors of these manuscripts have indiscriminately entered many legendary stories which cannot win approval from Muslim scholars. But this does not prejudice the basic fact that Palestine has been regarded a Holy land by the Muslims second only to Mecca.

The translation is an easy and pleasant reading and Dr. Matthews must be greatly commended for such a scholarly work.

## BOOKS ON ISLAM

1. The Teachings of Islam, by The Promised Messiah ..... \$ 2.00
2. The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II ..... 1.00
3. Muhammad, the Liberator of Women, by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II ..... .25
4. The New World Order of Islam, by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II ..... 1.00
5. The Economic Structure of Islamic Society, by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II ..... 1.00
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